

## **Customers who became homeless, went into Emergency Accommodation and found their own home with support**

### **Homeless customer with one child and another baby due, supported by the Emergency Accommodation (EA) Interventions project**

Miss W was in her thirties had a two year old son and was pregnant with her second child. She worked full-time and received Child Benefit and Housing Benefit. Her tenancy ended in July 2016 and she and her son moved into her friend's spare room. Miss W presented to the Council as homeless in August 2016, after she had been staying with her friend for about 5 weeks.

Miss W was placed in female-only emergency accommodation and lived there from October 2016 to February 2017. During this time, she saw posters where she was living advertising the EA Interventions team, and she asked to be referred there. At the start of working with the EA team Miss W said:

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*"It was like a ray of hope. I knew how hard I was prepared to work myself and it was like now there was someone who was prepared to help me in doing that."*

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She started to view properties, but found it difficult to find anything suitable within her budget, also not having the money for a holding fee was another barrier for her. Eventually, Miss W found an empty property with a letting agency, Miss W and her son moved into the privately rented two bedroomed flat in February 2017, about one month before her baby was born. The EA Interventions team referred her to Discretionary Support, who provided funding for a cooker, fridge, washing machine and beds. Miss W says the most difference had been the way that the EA Interventions officer had worked with her:

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*"I feel like she genuinely cared and had a genuine interest in what I was going through and had a genuine desire to help me with it... I*

*think she did her job to the best of her abilities within the constraints she had to work within."*

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### **Homeless customer with two children, supported by the Emergency Accommodation (EA) Bed & Breakfast Interventions project**

Due to domestic violence a woman and her two daughters left their home in March 2017. They presented as homeless to the Council, and her family was placed in emergency accommodation until they were placed in temporary accommodation in Kent. However, this was a long way from her daughters' school and playgroup, and away from their support network.

*"I would have had no choice but to stay there and start from scratch... It would have been hard, and I wouldn't have coped."*

A private property in Croydon became available and the customer decided that she wanted to move in. The customer told the Council and she was referred to the EA Interventions team. They helped her with the application for rent in advance and deposit and completed a budget planner to make sure that she could afford the property. Everything was completed by email, and the customer said that it was done very quickly and was a fairly smooth process. The customer and her daughters were able to move into the flat in June 2017.

The EA Interventions team also offered to pay for the customer's removals back from Kent to Croydon.

The customer said that she had not been given any choice in where she had been placed before, but her experience with the EA Interventions team had been very positive. She thought that perhaps this was partly because they were working with people who were also taking action to help themselves.

The customer does not know what she would have done without the EA Intervention team's help. She thought she would probably have had to stay in Kent, where she did not know anyone.

### **Landlord sold property – family ended up in emergency accommodation**

The landlord of a pregnant, single mum-of-two decided to sell her privately-rented

accommodation. She had to leave and to make matters worse she had recently become unemployed. Croydon Council arranged emergency accommodation for her, and her family, in a studio flat in Croydon. The emergency accommodation was small and with two children, one of whom was studying for GCSE's, it began to impact the family.

It was at this point that things began to change for the better. She met with the Emergency Accommodation (EA) Interventions team that was life-changing. Like many people, she worried that renting in the private sector would be too expensive. She discovered that the council could help pay the deposit and the first month's rent. They also set up a series of meetings about a range of issues, and she felt that a team that truly cared was taking her problems seriously.

*“They are more hands on and they do their best, they try, they even tell you about going back to work and all these things.... They were really good at what they do...”*

The EA Interventions team really got to know their customer and used their extensive network to find landlords who could provide suitable housing. She was offered a home; the EA Interventions team helped her apply for the deposit and rent and she moved in soon after.

The team also arranged vouchers for necessities such as carpets and a washing machine. She gave birth shortly after moving in. This woman is looking for work again, now she has a steady housing situation and some much-needed stability in her life again. The help, support and understanding she received from council were huge factors in her finding a new home.

*“...to have someone that I could talk to ... they were understanding and they said ok, this is what we can do... it's helpful.”*

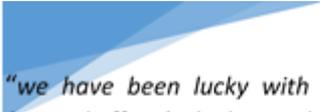
### **Customer with disabled child in emergency accommodation**

Mrs Y is a working mum who gets Housing Benefits to cover part of her rent. She lives with her disabled daughter aged 12 who has constant admission to Great

Ormond Street Hospital, and her mother who is in her eighties. Their home was unsuitable for her daughters needs as a result of the specialist equipment required. The house was a private tenancy. However in 2014, the landlord wanted to sell. Great Ormond Street liased with the Council in finding an adapted council property for the customer but as the council has 5000 people waiting for social housing, the council was unable to find suitable adapted accommodation before the customer became homeless after being served with an eviction order.

She presented as homeless and was housed in emergency accomodation, and after living there for just over a year and seeing the unpleasant and long journey ahead of her, Mrs Y decided to take control of her move by finding a home that would be suitable for her family in the location of her choice and as a result. The council supported her with a discretionary housing payment which paid for the deposit and rent in advance required for the move into her own home.

If Mrs Y had not been proactive and taken ownership of her family's housing situation, it is unlikely that she would have got a council house.



*"we have been lucky with this lady (council officer), she knows how to **use all the tools** and everything to get there because there was always some little issue with the agency, contract..."*

## **What can you do?**

Take control of your move today and visit <https://www.croydon.gov.uk/housing/your-home-your-move> for more information.